

## Executive

\* Councillor Julia McShane (Chairperson)

\* Councillor Tom Hunt (Vice-Chair)

\* Councillor Angela Goodwin

\* Councillor George Potter

\* Councillor Catherine Houston

\* Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith

\* Councillor Richard Lucas

\* Councillor Fiona White

Councillor Carla Morson

\*Present

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Howard Smith was in attendance.

### **EX64 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carla Morson.

### **EX65 Local Code of Conduct - Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

Councillor Angela Goodwin declared a non-pecuniary interest against Item 8 as she was a non-executive director sitting on the board of North Downs Housing.

### **EX66 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2024 were confirmed as correct. The Chair signed the minutes.

### **EX67 Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made the following announcements:

Guildford's markets in December

I'm delighted to say that we've rescheduled the festive market, which had to be postponed due to bad weather on the Festive Family Fun Day. Guildford's Festive Market will now take place on Sunday 8 December.

There are lots of other opportunities to buy festive treats, unusual Christmas presents and other goodies at all our specialist markets taking place during December. [Full details of all our specialist markets are on our website](#)

Improved play facilities at Dan's Meadow, The Briars

Groundworks for a new playground in South Ash will be starting on Monday 9 December 2024. The design for this Safari Adventure play area was finalised after we consulted local people.

The cost of the playground replacement will mostly be funded by Section 106 payments from development in the Ash area. It will also receive part-funding from the government through the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#).

#### Supporting National Tree Week 2024

This week is National Tree Week. As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability, we're marking the week by highlighting the vital role trees play in our borough. The week, organised by The Tree Council and partners, marks the start of the winter tree planting season.

Our tree planting programmes help us to create and preserve our green spaces, so that everyone can enjoy the outdoors and the beauty and wellbeing that trees provide. [More information about this is in the newsroom on our website.](#)

#### Guildford and Waverley Rural Forum

The first meeting of Guildford and Waverley Rural Forum took place on Monday at The Burys in Godalming. The group aims to bring local businesses, landowners, and rural organisations together with Guildford and Waverley officers and councillors to focus on rural issues.

This meeting was about rural planning. Future meetings will focus on tourism, employment space and connectivity. More information about this forum will be coming soon.

#### Celebrating artistic talent at Guildford House Open Exhibition 2024

Last Saturday a new exhibition opened at our Guildford House Gallery. The exhibition celebrates talented artists from across the UK and features 2D and 3D artwork shortlisted in our art competition. Supported by leading visual art consultancy Parker Harris, the competition received over 1,000 entries from 500 artists in only its second year.

Entry is free to this inspiring exhibition. It runs until Saturday 1 March 2025, so there's plenty of time to visit. [More about Guildford House Gallery events and opening times is on our website.](#)

#### Look out for the Winter Edition of About Guildford next week

The Winter edition of our resident e-newsletter, About Guildford, will be published next week. It will be packed with news, stories and updates from our borough. If you haven't yet signed up to receive our quarterly update you can [register on our website](#) by searching for 'digital newsletter.'

### **EX68 Review of Councillors' Allowances (including 12-month update)**

During the autumn of 2023, the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) conducted its review of the Scheme of Councillors Allowances. On 5 December 2023, the Panel submitted its final report with recommendations to full Council for consideration. In view of the Council's financial position at the time and the Council's determination to address those challenges, it was resolved to defer consideration of the report for a period of 12 months and to retain the existing

scheme of allowances without indexation. This resolution effectively froze councillors' allowances at their 2023 level for the 2024-25 financial year.

The Executive considered the resubmitted report along with a supplementary short report in which the IRP addressed certain changes to the Council's committee structure in the previous twelve months.

Mr Dennis Frost, Chairman of the IRP, and Panel member Mr Paul Marcus were in attendance. Mr Frost spoke to the report and took questions.

Additional legal advice and an alternative recommendation in respect of level 1 of the Dependent's Carers Allowance (DCA) was set out in the Supplementary Information Sheet. The original recommendation made by the IRP that proposed a lump sum payable in advance would not be compliant with regulations. It was explained that the alternative recommendation was the same as the IRPs in view of the fact that it proposed an upper limit of £500 claimable per year but was retrospective and on submission of valid receipts.

It was observed that the DCA was taxable income and an upper limit of £500 pre-tax for those members with extensive council business commitments might prove insufficient. It was proposed any limit set be reviewed by the IRP at an appropriate point.

The Executive noted that on 3 December Full Council would consider further alterations to the structure of committees in respect of the proposed split of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee into two new committees. Should Full Council agree to such, it was suggested a suitable remuneration arrangement was in place from the new municipal year with a schedule for the IRP to review this remuneration at an appropriate point.

The Executive proposed three amendments to the IRPs recommendations as set in the published report and consequently,

RESOLVED:

To approve the following recommendation to full Council at its meeting on 3 December 2024:

That the Council adopts the recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in the report submitted to the Executive, subject to the amendment of recommendations (2), (4) and (16) as follows:

- (2) That no councillor shall be entitled to receive at any time more than ~~one~~ **two** Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs), and that where a councillor would otherwise be entitled to ~~two~~ **three** or more SRAs, then only the **two** higher-valued allowances should be received, and that this 'Two SRA Only Rule' be adopted into the Scheme of Allowances.
- (4) That the Leader of the Council should receive a Tier One Special Responsibility Allowance of ~~250%~~ **200%** of the Basic Allowance, ~~£21,448~~ **£17,158** per annum.
- (16) That, ~~subject to a further review by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel in 12 months' time,~~ a new Dependants' Carers' Allowance be included in the scheme of allowances as follows:
- ~~Level 1 (a) – A £500 annual allowance for Councillors where there is one or more children aged 12 or younger that normally reside in their household and for whom they are caring. This allowance would only be payable until the child's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. This allowance would be taxable.~~
- ~~Level 1 (b) – A £500 annual allowance for Councillors where there is one or more persons that normally reside in their household and for whom they are a registered carer. This allowance would be taxable.~~
- ~~Level 1 – This will be paid to those councillors who necessarily incur expense in arranging for general care of (i) their children, aged 13 or under, or (ii) one or more persons that normally reside in their household and for whom they are a registered carer, to enable them to undertake any approved duty, up to a maximum of £500 per annum per councillor. The allowance shall be paid as a reimbursement of incurred expenditure against receipts.~~
- ~~Level 2 – This shall be for specialist care based at cost upon production of receipts and requiring medical evidence that this type of care is required. This allowance would not be taxable and shall apply for councillors with caring responsibility for persons of any age. There shall be no limit to these claims, provided that they are made in respect of approved duties.~~

Reason(s):

In order to comply with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).

**EX69 Afghanistan Relocation Assistance Programme (ARAP) & other refugee schemes - extra support from Guildford Borough Council**

The Home Office and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) had asked the Council for support to increase the number of refugees from Afghanistan that the Council was supporting. The MOD had offered up to 10 properties on the Pirbright estate for 3 years to accommodate refugees under the ARAP scheme. The proposed arrangement was that the MOD would be the landlord and the contractor Pinnacle would maintain, furnish and repair the properties.

The Executive considered a report which sought agreement for the Council to support these additional families for a period of 3 years. This support included assessing the families' needs and connecting them with local services such as health, education and English classes as well as assistance in finding employment. The intention was for the Afghan families to move on to further accommodation following the conclusion of the 3 year lease. The Home Office provided grant funding to the Council for each family member supported under the scheme at a value of £20,500 per person.

The report was previously considered by the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 September 2024 where overwhelming support for the council's work with refugees had been voiced.

The Executive also expressed its support for the recommendations in the report and its overall support for the delivery of assistance to refugees. It was recognised that in many cases those requiring assistance from Afghanistan had previously acted in support of United Kingdom armed forces. Consequently, the Executive

**RESOLVED:**

1. To commit to supporting an additional 11 ARAP families in properties offered by the Ministry of Defence, MEARS and the Find Your Own pathway; and
2. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Community Services in consultation with the Strategic Director for Housing, Communities and Environment and the Lead Councillor for Communities to decide any further approaches the council receives from the Home Office to support refugees into the borough.

**Reason(s):**

1. The resettlement team at Guildford is already well established after successfully supporting various families under Home Office resettlement schemes and we will be able to support vulnerable people with the professionalism and compassion required at no extra cost to the council budget. All support is Home Office grant funded.
2. The increase of refugee households in Guildford adds to the diversity of the area and the families will have the opportunity in the long term to contribute to the local economy through employment and voluntary work. This results in a vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages. The resettlement schemes present an opportunity to promote community spirit, to encourage individuals and families to welcome and support refugee households and for our communities to be more resilient in times of need. Resettlement contributes to an inclusive borough.

**EX70 Procurement of contract for provision of Servicing Domestic Boilers (West Area)**

As a part of the strategic procurement pipeline work the Council was in the process of preparing a tender to award a long-term contract for Domestic Boiler Servicing. Discussions were taking place with Waverley borough Council and arrangements for the long term contract would take about 12 months to conclude. In the meantime, the current regulatory service Domestic Boiler Servicing still needed to be undertaken.

The Executive considered a report that sought approval to award new 12 month contract to K&T Heating Services Limited under the Fusion 21 Framework (Fusion21 Heating, Renewables, and Electrical Framework- Lot 1 Domestic Heating [Combustibles]). If agreed this arrangement would enable the Council to procure services of a contractor to deliver Council's statutory duty of servicing of domestic boilers. This was a regulatory service for Gas safety compliance. It was noted that the current contract with K&T covering the west region of the Council expired on 6th December 2024.

The Executive noted the regularisation of the procurement process and good governance involved. Officers were thanked for the content in the report in respect of the climate change implications.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

Authorise the entering into of a new contract with K&T Heating Services Limited under Fusion 21 Framework (Fusion21 Heating, Renewables, and Electrical

Framework- Lot 1 Domestic Heating [Combustibles]) for the servicing of domestic boilers with a financial cap of £1.3 million pounds for a term of 1 year.

Reason(s):

1. The Council is preparing a tender for a longer-term contract which is envisaged to be awarded in 12 months period. It is imperative that whilst the council is preparing for a long-term contract, the regulatory service of Domestic Boiler Servicing is provided continuously. Any new contractor will need a 3-month mobilisation period and considering that new long-term contract will be ready for execution in 12 months' time, continuity of the incumbent supplier becomes imperative.
2. Additionally, the costs for demobilisation of current contractor and cost of system integration and mobilisation of new contract for a short period would outweigh any benefit from bringing in any potential new supplier.
3. Value for money is demonstrated by continuity of the service noting that we have continuity of service, and K&T are the no.1 ranked supplier on the Fusion 21 framework. There is an approximate saving of 10% on existing fees by using this framework.

**EX71 Review of the loan to North Downs Housing**

North Downs Housing Limited (NDH) was a wholly owned housing company that was established by the Council in 2016. The company was funded through a mixture of equity funding and a loan from the Council.

The Executive received a report summarising the investment into North Downs Housing so far, the interest charged to date and the value outstanding. It was noted that the loan interest due to the Council for the period 23 August 2022 to 31 March 2023 was £679,546. The financial position of NDH at the time did not allow for this to be paid. This sum remained outstanding and was a debtor from NDH to the Council. Although the company was now trading profitably it still needed to deal with the outstanding interest from 2022-23.

A further report would be brought to Executive in March 2025 outlining the options available for dealing with the outstanding interest owed.

Councillor Angela Goodwin declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was a non-executive director sitting on the board of North Downs Housing and she left the chamber for the duration of the debate.

It was confirmed that responsibility for the loan to NDH rested with the Executive and not the Executive Shareholder and Trustee Committee.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

To note the investment into North Downs Housing, the interest charged to date and the value outstanding.

Reason(s):

1. A decision needs to be taken about the treatment of the outstanding debt.
2. To ensure that the Executive remains informed of financial matters in order to be transparent and make decisions.

**EX72 To grant a lease at the Rodboro Building, Bridge Street, GU1 4SB**

The lease to JD Wetherspoon at the Rodboro Building expired in January 2023. Following the receipt of an independent, external valuation report, officers negotiated terms for a renewed lease with the existing tenant. All new lease agreements with a rental income of £200,000 and above over the life of the contract constitute as a Key Decision and require Executive approval.

The report sought Executive approval to proceed with the proposed transaction as set out.

The Executive was reassured the Council was receiving best value for the lease. The Executive,

RESOLVED:

To approve the grant of the lease as laid out within the report.

Reason(s):

1. The proposed lease terms represent best consideration.
2. The proposed annual rent secures an income stream for the Council for 25 years and avoids vacant property costs.
3. The grant of the proposed lease ensures continuity of occupation and demonstrates effective estate management of the portfolio.

**EX73 Asset Disposal Programme - Phase 1**



The Executive considered a report seeking approval for the first phase of proposed asset disposals in line with the Asset Disposal Strategy approved by the Executive on the 18 April 2024. The targeted £50m (net) capital receipts was to be achieved over a 3-year period to the end of the financial year ending March 2027.

The Executive heard that the Council had negotiated combinations of good lease arrangements and sales offers in excess of valuations in respect of the properties concerned.

It was acknowledged that considerable time and effort was required to evaluate and negotiate to achieve the best commercial outcome for the disposals programme. Officers were thanked.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the disposal of 71 – 72 North Street, Guildford, on the terms set out in the Summary Property Report at Appendix 3a and the entering into of all relevant legal documentation required to complete the legal transaction.
2. To approve the disposal of Eastgate Court, 195 – 205 High Street, Guildford, on the terms set out in the Summary Property Report at Appendix 1a and the entering into of all relevant legal documentation required to complete the legal transaction.
3. To delegate authority to the Joint Assistant Director for Assets and Property in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property and the Joint Strategic Director for Finance and Resources (S151) to negotiate any amendments to the terms for disposal of Eastgate Court, 195 – 205 High Street and 71 – 72 North Street as are necessary to complete the transaction.
4. To approve the disposal of Wyke School Reception Building and the appointment of external agents to commence marketing.
5. To delegate authority to the Joint Assistant Director for Assets and Property in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property and the Joint Strategic Director for Finance and Resources (S151) to negotiate terms for a disposal of Wyke School Reception Building at best consideration on the open market and/or negotiate with special purchasers and to enter into all relevant legal documentation required to complete the transactions.

Reason(s):

To enable the Council to generate capital receipts through the sale of approved property assets to contribute to the £50m (net) target, as set out in the Financial Recovery Plan to reduce Council debt to achieve a sustainable financial position.

**EX74 Freehold Disposal of Old Manor House, East Horsley**

The Executive approved the freehold disposal of Old Manor House on the 22 February 2024. The property had been openly marketed for sale by local estate agents for 4 months who have received a range of offers. Officers sought Executive approval to agree the best offer the Council could achieve within the range of offers received to enable the conveyancing process to commence and the freehold sale of the property to complete.

The Executive accepted that the original valuation had not comprehensively accounted for the levels of investment involved in bringing the property back to into use. The Executive kept in mind the reasons for disposing of the property in the first place and remained committed to achieving best value for residents.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. To dispose of the freehold interest in Old Manor House at best consideration based on the offers set out at paragraph 6.1 of this report and enter into all agreements necessary to give effect to this disposal.
2. To delegate authority to the Joint Assistant Director for Assets and Property to consider any objections received in response to the advert under Section 123 (2A) Local Government Act 1972, as set out at paragraph 10.2.

Reason(s):

1. To generate a capital receipt that will contribute towards the target to secure £50 million (net) of capital receipts from the sale of General Fund property assets, as set out in the Council's Financial Recovery Plan to reduce Council debt and achieve a sustainable financial position.
2. To dispose of a liability and remove significant ongoing costs from future revenue budgets.
3. To bring a large, vacant and depreciating asset back into residential use for the benefit of the Guildford community.

The meeting finished at 8.15 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman